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ANIMAL LOVER'S TOUR



LENGTH:

Mileage: about 30 miles

Estimated time: 2.5 to 4 hours depending
on stopping time



Welcome to the Rio Grande National Forest animal lovers! You will have ample opportunity on this tour to view a variety of wildlife. For the animal lover that delights in seeing a herd of pronghorns running across the hillsides, a mule deer hopping into its cover of trees, a bighorn sheep traversing around rocky terrain or a golden eagle soaring across a beautiful blue backdrop, a couple hours spent on this tour will be worth your while.



Del Norte Ranger District
RIO GRANDE NATIONAL FOREST

10 MAR 1992

PRONGHORN:

All along English Valley Road, you can anticipate seeing pronghorns. Look for spots of white against the brown background. The white is their white rump patch, while the bodies are a brownish-tan color.

Pronghorns are not antelope, but the terms are often used synonymously. Antelope are found in Old World countries, while pronghorns are found in the United States.

Pronghorns are commonly seen feeding on forbs and grasses in the area, but seem to favor blue grama.



DEER:

Mule Deer are seen regularly throughout the Forest but commonly use separate winter and summer ranges. The amount of forage available on winter range often controls deer populations.

On this loop, Mule Deer are seen year-round, but travelling in the morning or early evening provides the best viewing.

WILDLIFE



Illustrations courtesy of Cathy Sims, the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the USDA Forest Service

BIGHORN SHEEP:

Sheep are a little more difficult to spot, but if you travel during the right time of day and with a little luck, you might see some on the ledges of Eagle Rock.

There is an information sign discussing the sheep at the bottom of the rock. If you scan those ledges above and around the sign,

you will probably spot some of these magnificent creatures. The sheep will be a tannish-brown color lighter than that of the rock. During the day, they bed down and are difficult to see, but if you tour before 11:00 am, you might see them moving around. Looking for movement will help in spotting the sheep at these times.

COYOTES:

An occasional coyote is spotted in this area. If you happen to see one, it will probably be on the move. Coyotes have the ability to cover large areas as well as adapt to varying conditions. This is the reason for their remarkable success despite efforts by man to exterminate them.

A coyote looks like a grayish-brown medium-sized underfed dog. It eats mainly rabbits, hares, and rodents but also can be seen feeding on carrion, livestock, wild birds, and fruits.



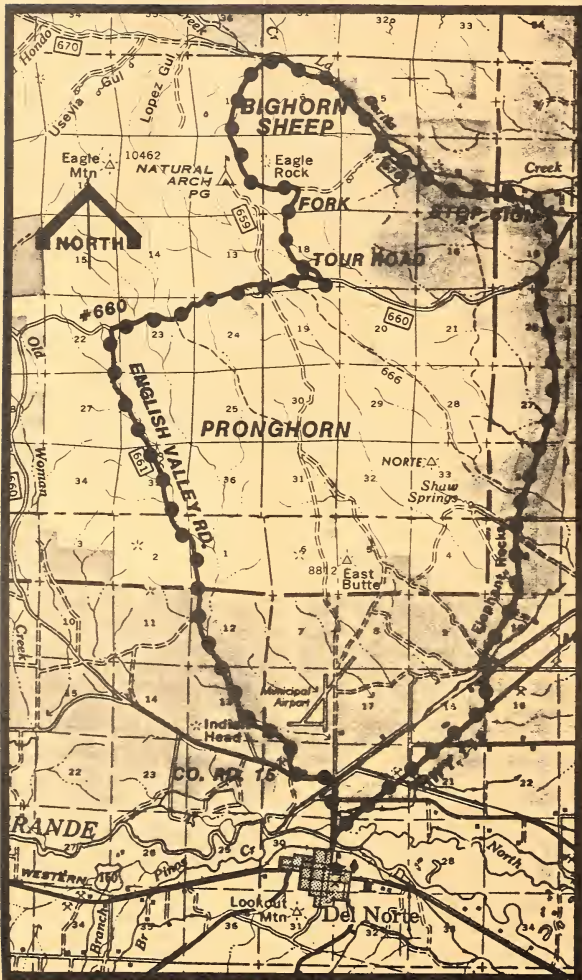
BIRDS:

On English Valley Road the bird watcher may see horned larks, loggerhead shrikes, vesper sparrows, and Brewer's sparrows. On the second part on the tour on the turn toward Eagle Rock, potential sightings include: mountain bluebirds, bushtits, pinyon jays, green-tailed towhees, flycatchers, song sparrows, and savannah sparrows. Finally, around the rocky ledges of Eagle Rock, potential sightings include: golden eagles, prairie falcons, ravens, rock doves, white-throated swifts, and rock wrens.

WELCOME TO THE RIO GRANDE NATIONAL FOREST

caring for the land...

and serving people



BEST TIME TO TOUR: early to mid morning. (before 11:00 am)

THE ROUTE:

The tour begins at the stoplight in the town of Del Norte on US Highway 160. At the stoplight, turn north on Co. Hwy. 112, and go about 1 mile. Turn left on the paved road to the airport, right after crossing the Rio Grande River. After crossing the canal, turn left on Cty. Rd. 15. Go past the wrecking yard, about 1/4 mile, to the English Valley Road, a 4WD road. Follow the English Valley Road for about 7.5 miles to where the road intersects Forest Rd. #660. Turn east and follow for about 2.5 miles. You will come to Forest Rd. #659, Natural Arch Road. The tour road is about .5 mile after Natural Arch Road and heads north. Follow this 4WD road until you come to a fork in the road; stay to the left. Stay on the road for about 10 miles until you come to a Stop sign. Turn south at the Stop sign (on a gravel road). Follow this road until you hit Co. Hwy. 112. Turn right and that will bring you back into Del Norte.